THE JATAKAS IN STONE SCULPTURE

Charming tales of the former births of the Buddha as a bird, beast and man!

ANJALI PAL



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JATAKAS IN STONE SCULPTURE

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Anjali Pal

Illustrated by
Madhu Powle



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These stories have been selected and retold from the Jatakas or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births, translated into English from the Pali text of Prof. V. Fausboll, by various persons under the editorship of Prof. E. B. Cowell, Professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge University. The six volumes of this English text were brought out by the Cambridge University Press between 1895-1907.

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FOR

Ranjan and Adit

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INTRODUCTION

Centuries before the birth of Christ, Buddhism was a flourishing religion in India. About 563 B. C. Gautama Buddha was born in Nepal. As a youth he was given to deep meditation and prayer. At the age of twenty-nine he finally renounced the world, left his home and family and went into the forests to search for Nirvana or Supreme Peace.

For forty-five years Buddha wandered through India and Nepal, preaching his doctrines of correct living and mental discipline to the people.

In the course of his teachings, he narrated the stories of his former births known as the Jatakas. There are 547 stories in all, which stress the correct values of life according to the Buddhist creed. The principle good character in each story is Buddha in his previous births as bird, beast or man.

After Buddha's death, his followers continued to retell these stories in order to keep alive the memory of the great sage, and also to instil Buddhist precepts in the minds of the people. At first, these stories were handed down from generation to generation in oral form. Later they were put together in a complete written text.

The emperor Asoka, who became an ardent Buddh-

ist after the destructive Kalinga wars, was responsible for firmly establishing Buddhism throughout his vast empire. He erected stupas in different parts of the country. The stupa consisted of a masonry hemisphere, which enshrined a relic of the Buddha. Though the stupa was a simple unadorned edifice, the railings and gates which encircled it, were often magnificently carved with scenes from the life of the Buddha and the figures of birds and beasts.

One of these Buddhist stupas is at Barhut which lies 120 miles south-west of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. This stupa was constructed after Asoka's death, during the reign of the Sunga monarchs bet-

ween 184-82 B. C. Scenes from over a score of the Jatakas are elaborately carved on the railings. Apart from the stupa, not much is left at the actual site. Most of the railings have been removed and preserved in the Indian Museum at Calcutta.

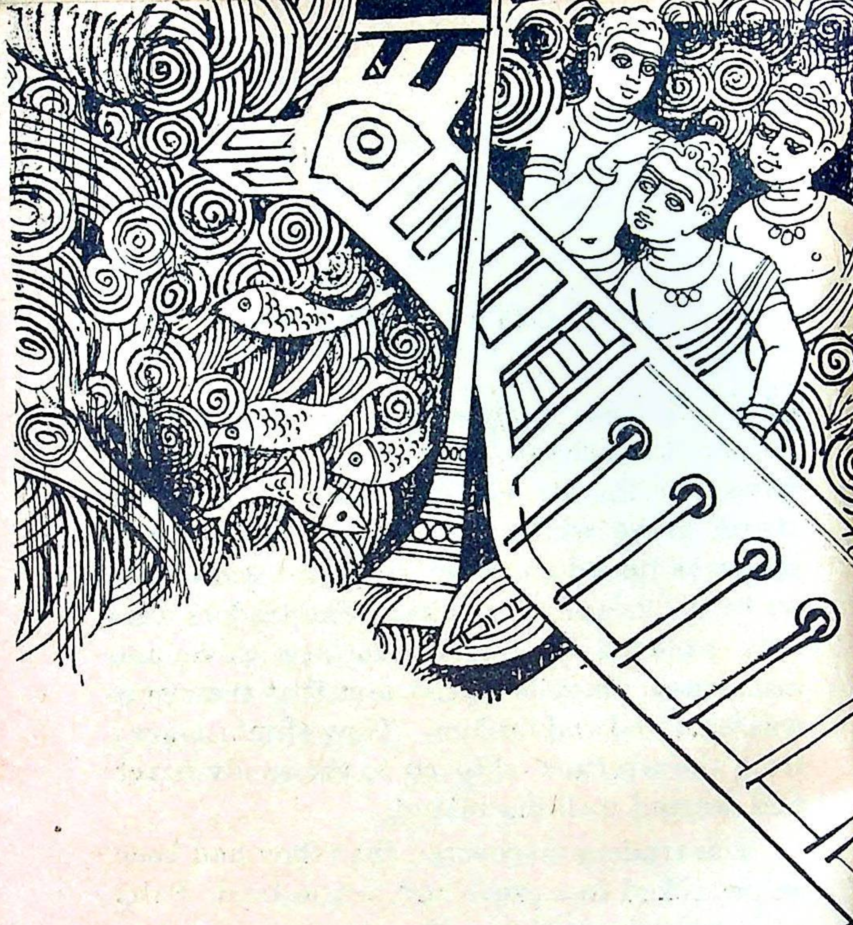
The stories in this book have been selected from those sculpted on the Barhut railings. The Jatakas are famous in the sacred literature of the world and are a delightful form of moral instruction. Their simple appeal and charm has not diminished with the passage of twenty five centuries. They are still read and enjoyed by adults and children of different creeds and races.

—*Author*

THE GOBLIN TOWN

ONCE upon a time, five hundred traders set sail from the southern coast of India, on a voyage to the far eastern lands. A terrible storm arose while they were at sea. Their ship was tossed about by the waves and driven on to the island of Lanka. The traders were very relieved to find themselves alive and unharmed, in spite of the fact that their ship was battered and broken. They climbed down from the wrecked ship on to the sandy beach and started walking inland.

The traders discovered that they had been shipwrecked in a green and fertile land. Palm trees waved gently in the breeze and cattle grazed near the shore. Fields of grain and barley stretched away in the distance. The traders walked on until they saw the battlements of a large, prosperous - looking town ahead of them. They stared in wonder at the tall houses and towers which were built of pure white marble and inlaid with deep blue tiles.





They halted outside the city gates and heard the sound of soft voices singing within.

After a while the gates opened and five hundred women, followed by a band of slaves came out and stood in front of the traders. The women were very beautiful and richly dressed. Ropes of large, gleaming pearls hung around their necks and they wore rings and earrings of gold, set with rubies the colour of deep red wine. The most beautiful of them all, addressed the chief trader in a voice as sweet as honey, "From where have you come good sirs, and whither are you going ?"

"Alas, good lady, we are shipwrecked traders cast upon these shores, far from our native land. We have nowhere to go and do not know what to do now that our ship is damaged beyond repair. At the moment we are both hungry and thirsty, and beg you to give us food and drink."

"Come with us good sirs. We will take you to our home and feed you and look after you."

The traders followed the women into the town. They walked through streets paved with black marble and lined by shady flowering trees. They gazed in amazement at the fine houses, for they had seen nothing like this

before. At last, the women stopped in front of a large mansion, decorated with round domes and tall spires. The domes were covered with layers of gold leaf which shone in the sun. The traders and the women went inside. The interior of the mansion was richly decorated with carpets and wall hangings of brocade.

Bowing slaves took the traders to their chambers. They bathed in perfumed water and dressed in silk robes laid out for them. When they were ready, they were taken to the banqueting hall where the five hundred women were waiting. They all sat down together at long tables of polished ebony. Rare foods were served on fine gold dishes and red wine in crystal goblets.

When the traders had eaten their fill, the fairest of all the women said to them, "Good sirs, we are widows. Three years ago our husbands went on a voyage and never returned home. They must have perished in some strange lands or drowned in the perilous seas. Since then we have lived alone in this town of Sirisavatthu. Fate has sent you to our island with no hope of return to your own country. Why do you not remain here and make this your home? We will be your wives and look after your every comfort."

The five hundred traders were so dazzled by the beauty of the women, and the splendour of their surroundings that they agreed to marry the five hundred women of Sirisavatthu. They went back to their chambers and retired for the night on couches hung with rich brocades.

Late at night, when everyone was asleep, the chief trader was disturbed by the sound of voices. "What are these strange sounds?" he thought to himself. "They are voices, but do not sound like those of humans."

He got up from his couch and hiding behind a window, looked outside. To his horror he saw that the five hundred women had turned into goblins and were walking through the town. He quickly awoke his companions. "Get up at once. We must flee from this place. This town is haunted and the women are not humans but goblins."

Some of the traders who had eaten and drunk too much, did not believe him. "You are imagining things" they said. "You must be dreaming. How can these beautiful women be goblins. Let us sleep. Do not disturb us again." They turned over on their backs and fell fast asleep.

Some of the traders however, believed their

chief. They tried to get up and escape from the house of goblins. They found that they could not move, as they were held fast by magic chains. Trembling with fear, they lay where they were without stirring. At dawn, the goblin women resumed their human forms and returned to the house. Beautifully dressed, they visited the five hundred traders and bade them go downstairs, where a meal was ready.

The traders who wished to remain in Sirisavatthu immediately jumped up, as the magic chains which bound them in the night had disappeared. They bathed, dressed and went to the banqueting hall to join the women. The two hundred and fifty traders who wanted to flee from the goblin town could not move as they were still held by the magic chains.

They remained where they were until midday, when they saw a cloud in the sky moving towards the city. The cloud came closer and they saw that it was in fact a flying white horse with wings of shining silver. The horse circled over the house where the traders were imprisoned, then landed in the courtyard. He looked at the traders with his ruby-red eyes and gently asked them, "Which of you wants to go home?"

"O noble horse, we all wish to escape from this accursed place!" they cried together. "But we are bound with magic chains and cannot move."

"Rise up, and you will find that the chains have disappeared" was the reply.

The traders got up from their couches. To their amazement they found that the magic chains no longer bound their legs and arms. Hastily, they climbed out of the window and onto the back of the white horse. As there was not enough place for everyone, some of them clung onto his neck and tail. The white horse rose up in the air and flew away across the island of Lanka and the sea, back to India.

Those traders who remained in the goblin town became the slaves of the goblin women. In the course of time, they too were changed into goblins and were forced to live forever in Sirisavatthu. The traders who believed their chief and managed to escape with the flying white horse, returned to their homes and families and lived happily ever after.

THE FOWLER AND THE QUAILS

THERE once lived a flock of many thousand quails in a forest outside Banaras. The leader was a beautiful golden-brown bird, with piercing eyes that shone like rubies. They lived happily for a long time, feeding on the insects and berries found in the thick leafy undergrowth. They nested in the bushes and multiplied rapidly in numbers.

One day a fowler who caught and sold birds, came to the forest to lay snares. He heard the quails calling to one another. He thought of a plan to trap them. He hid behind a tree and imitated the cry of a quail. At once many quails came hopping and flying to the spot. When they had gathered round the tree, the fowler flung a large net over them and drew the sides close together. The quails could not escape. The fowler caught them all and put them into a reed basket. He went





straight to the market place in Banaras and sold the birds to the town cooks for a good sum of silver.

Every day he returned to the forest and by the same device trapped more quails.

One day the quail-king called his flock together and said, "My children, daily this fowler traps large numbers of our family. Soon there will be none of us left. I have thought of a way in which to outwit him. Tomorrow when he throws the net over you all, let each one put his head through the mesh. Then fly away with the net and put it down on a thorn-bush. Slip out from under the net and thus make your escape."

"Very well," replied all the quails obediently.

The next day, when the fowler threw his net over the quails, they did exactly as they had been told by their leader. They put their heads through the mesh, and flying away with the net, set it down on a large thorn-bush. Then they escaped from underneath. The fowler spent the whole day disentangling his net from the thorns. When evening came, he went home empty-handed.

Everyday the quails played the same trick on the fowler, so that he spent most of his

days freeing his net and returning home without any birds. The fowler's wife, who was a very bad-tempered woman, got angry with her husband. "Everyday you come home empty-handed. I am sure you are spending your money elsewhere."

"No, my dear," replied the fowler. "I have not caught any quails, so how can I have earned any money? The truth of the matter is, that the birds have become very clever and have learnt to outwit me. The minute I throw my net over them, they fly off with it and settle down on a thorny-bush and escape from underneath. I spend the whole day disentangling my net from the thorns. But don't worry. Sooner or later they will argue with each other. As long as they live in unity they will escape. When they quarrel, they will fall prey to me. Then I will catch the whole lot and that will bring a smile to your face."

Not long after this, one of the quails, when settling on the thorn bush, trod by accident on another quail's head.

"Who trod on my head?" asked the second quail, angrily.

"I did," was the reply. "But don't be angry. It was a mistake."

Nevertheless, the quail was very annoyed and a fight started. They argued back and forth, each telling the other, "I suppose you lifted up the net single-handed."

The quail-king listened to the two birds and thought, "There is no safety here with these two quarrelsome quails. Soon they will no longer lift up the net. Then the fowler will get his opportunity and catch them."

He told the two quails to fight no longer. When they did not listen to him, he flew away with some of his faithful followers. Many quails who had taken sides in the quarrel, remained behind and the peace of the forest was disturbed by their endless bickering.

A few days later the fowler came back and once again imitating the note of a quail, flung his net over the birds. Immediately one quail said to another, "When you lifted the net last time, all the hair fell off your head. Now lift the net and all the feathers will fall off your body."

"Indeed," retorted the other angry quail. "Last time when you lifted the net, both your wings turned black. Now lift the net and see what happens."

While they were busy inviting each other to lift the net, the fowler himself lifted it up.

He put all the quails into his basket and went home with them. His wife was happy once more to see her husband's basket full.

The quail-king on the other hand, made his home in a distant part of the forest and lived there in safety with the rest of his obedient flock.

THE BLACK BULL

ONCE upon a time, an old woman lived in a small village outside Banaras. She was very poor, and kept lodgers to earn a little money. When they left, they gave her a calf in payment of their dues. The old woman reared the calf as if it were her own child, and fed him on good rice, rice gruel, and other tasty food.

The calf grew up into a sturdy bull, and was known in the village as 'Granny's Blackie', for he was jet black. The whole day he wandered through the village with the other cattle. Sometimes the village urchins caught hold of his horns, ears and dewlaps, and rode along with him. Often they playfully held on to his tail and mounted his back, for he was a very gentle and good-natured animal.

The bull soon grew tired of this idle existence and thought to himself, "My mistress is

very poor, and she has reared me as if I were her own child. I must try and earn some money to ease her hard lot."

So he was always looking out for a job. One day a young merchant came by, leading a caravan of five hundred wagons. The way to Banaras was through a ford in the bed of a dried-up river, outside the village. Now the bottom of this ford was very rough and stony, and the merchant's oxen could not pull the wagons across. He yoked all five hundred oxen together in a single team and harnessed them to one cart. Still they could not pull a single wagon across the ford.

The black bull, and the other village cattle, were grazing nearby. The merchant being a good judge of cattle, went to see if there was a thorough-bred bull amongst them, who could pull the wagons across the ford. When he saw the black bull, he was sure that he was strong enough for such hard work. He asked the herdsmen who were sitting with the cattle, "Who owns this animal? I would like him to pull my wagons across the ford, and I am prepared to pay well for his services."

"Harness him to your carts if you wish. He has no master here," replied the herdsmen.

When the merchant slipped a cord through





the bull's nose and tried to lead him away, the animal would not budge. He said to the merchant, "If you want my services you must pay me."

"If you pull these five hundred wagons across the ford, I will pay you two silver coins per cart, that is a thousand pieces in all" replied the merchant.

The black bull needed no further persuasion, and allowed himself to be yoked to the wagons. With a single pull he dragged the first wagon across the ford. Similarly, he hauled all the five hundred wagons to the other side. The merchant counted five hundred coins, at the rate of only one per cart, and tied them in a bundle which he hung around the bull's neck. The bull who had watched the merchant, thought to himself, "This fellow is a cheat. He is not paying me according to our contract. I will not allow him and his carts to pass."

So he stood in the middle of the path and blocked the way. The merchant's servants did their best to push the bull aside. He was so strong that they could not move him a single inch.

"I suppose the bull knows that I have paid him less," thought the merchant. He added

another five hundred coins to the bundle around the bull's neck and said to him, "Here is your full payment for pulling my wagons across the ford."

Away ran the bull with the thousand pieces of silver, to his mistress.

"What is that around the neck of Granny's Blackie ?" cried the village children, running up to him. But the bull ignored them and went straight to his mistress. He was completely worn out and his eyes were red with fatigue. He had spent the whole day dragging the merchant's wagons across the ford. The old woman untied the bundle around the bull's neck and seeing the pile of silver, cried out, "From where did you get all this money, my child ?"

The herdsmen told her how the bull had earned the money. "Oh, why did you go through so much labour for my sake ? I have no wish to live on your earnings" she exclaimed.

She tenderly washed the bull with warm water and rubbed his body with oil. She gave him fresh water to drink and fed him on a tasty rice-gruel, which was his favourite dish. Then the black bull lay down and rested for a whole day and a night.

The old woman bought a little brick house

with some of the money the bull had earned. Next to it, she built a comfortable stable for the bull. She saved the rest of the money. Both she and the bull lived in ease and comfort for the remainder of their lives.

THE JACKAL AND THE OTTERS

ONCE upon a time, a jackal named Mayavi, lived with his wife in a forest grove on the banks of the river Ganges, outside Banaras.

One day, Mayavi's wife said to him, "Dear husband, I am very hungry today and I feel like eating some fresh fish. Do you think that you can get a tasty rohita fish for me?"

"Of course" replied the jackal confidently. "Just wait awhile and I will somehow bring back a rohita fish for you to eat."

Now the jackal was a land animal, who did not know how to swim. Though he had promised his wife a fresh fish, he was not sure how to catch one. However, he tied some large creeper leaves around his four feet, so as not to make a noise and crept silently down the side of the river. After he had gone a short distance, he came across two otters. named Gambhiracari and Anutiracari, sitting

at the edge of the water. They were gazing at the river in the hopes of seeing a fish which they could catch and eat.

Everyone knows that otters swim very well. So the jackal, who was a very clever animal, thought to himself, "I shall wait and see if these two otters manage to catch a fish. If they are successful, I will try to outwit them and take the fish for my wife."

He hid behind a tree and watched the two otters. There was not a sound except for the humming of some brilliantly coloured dragon-flies as they glided above the water. The three animals crouched motionless, watching and waiting. After a few minutes a ripple appeared on the calm waters. Peering down the otter, Gambhiracari, saw a huge rohita fish swim slowly by, its scales shining silver in the strong sunshine. With one bound, the otter leapt into the water and caught the fish by its tail. But the fish was very strong and swam away dragging Gambhiracari with it. The otter cried out to his friend, "Anutiracari, help me. This fish is very powerful and is carrying me away. It is large enough for both of us to share, so come quickly."

"Hold on firmly, Gambhiracari. I am coming to help you. Do not let the fish escape"

replied Anutiracari, as he jumped into the river and swam towards his friend. The two otters managed to drag the rohita fish to the river-bank, where they killed it. Then each otter told the other, "You divide it." But they could not agree on an equal division and quarrelled. Not knowing what to do next, they sat down sulkily next to the fish.

At this point, the jackal emerged from his hiding-place behind the tree-trunk and going up to the two otters asked, "What is the matter friends? Why are you staring in front of you instead of eating this tasty fish?"

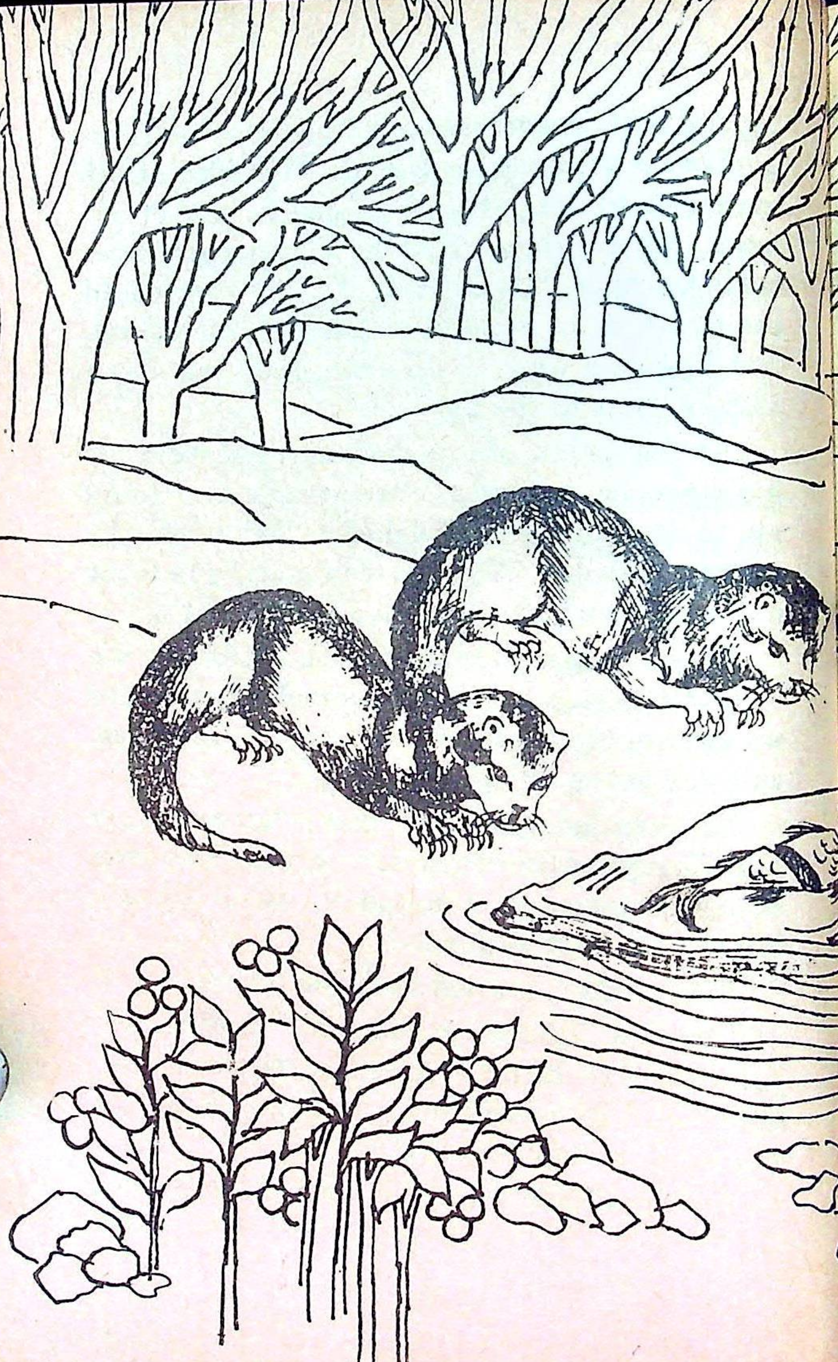
"Lord jackal," replied both otters. "We caught this fish and have quarrelled, because we are unable to divide it fairly. Good sir, will you settle our problem?"

"I have judged many cases fairly in my time," replied the jackal. "I will help you both. But you must agree to abide by my decision if I act as judge."

"Certainly," replied both the otters.

"Very well," said the jackal. "Anutiracari, you take the tail. Gambhiracari, you take the head. As payment for acting as judge, I will take the middle part."

Having divided the fish into three pieces,



he told the otters, "Eat your portions and stop quarrelling."

He siezed his share which was the tastiest and ran off with it in his mouth. The two otters watched him sadly. They felt as if they had lost a thousand pieces of gold and said to one another, "If only we had not quarrelled, this fish would have filled our stomachs for a long time to come. Now the jackal has taken the best part and left us with the head and the tail."

The jackal, on the other hand, was very pleased and said to himself, "Now I can give my wife what she wanted, a fresh rohita fish to eat."

The jackal's wife saw her husband coming and called out, "My lord, how glad I am to see you with your mouth full! But how did you manage to catch the fish? Fish live in the water, whereas you live on the land. Moreover you do not know how to swim."

The jackal told his wife the whole story and how he had obtained the best part of the rohita fish through the dispute between the two otters..

"The two otters became weak-minded because they quarrelled," said the jackal. "Because they quarrelled, they lost their prize."

So Mayavi, the jackal and his wife, feasted on the fresh rohita fish. The otters ate up their small and and bony portions and resolved never to fight again, lest a worse fate befell them.

THE VALIANT WHITE HORSE

LONG ago, King Brahmadatta reigned over the kingdom of Banaras. When he went in state through the city, he rode a thoroughbred charger from Sindh. This horse was a magnificent animal. His coat was the colour of pure white snow on the mountain-tops. His eyes glowed like twin suns, and his mane flowed in long silky strands over his neck. When the king mounted him, the horse held his head aloft with pride, and neighed loudly to clear the way for his royal master.

The white horse was fed on the finest three-year-old rice, which was served to him on a golden dish worth a hundred thousand pieces of silver. His stable was strewn with sweet-scented flowers, and hung with crimson silk curtains. Above was draped a canopy studded with gold stars, and the walls of the stable were decorated with garlands of jasmine and

roses. From the centre of the canopy hung a gold lamp. This was filled with perfumed oil and burnt day and night.

Now Banaras was a very wealthy and flourishing city and many of the neighbouring kings cast envious eyes at King Brahmadatta's kingdom. There came a time when seven powerful kings formed an alliance and surrounded Banaras with their armies. They sent a messenger to King Brahmadatta saying, "Either you yield your kingdom to us, or we will storm your city."

The king consulted his ministers and told them, "Seven hostile kings wish to wage war against us. What do you think I should do?"

The ministers thought over the matter and replied, "Sir, we feel that there is no alternative but to wage war against the seven kings. But you must not endanger your life by entering the battlefield. Send for your bravest knight and let him challenge the seven kings. If he is defeated, we will decide what to do next."

King Brahmadatta sent for his most valiant knight and said to him, "Sir knight, do you think you can fight the seven kings who have surrounded our fair city?"

"Sir," replied the knight, "only give me your noble charger, and I will be able to fight not only these seven kings, but all the other kings in India also."

"Take my charger or any other horse you please and set forth to battle," agreed the king.

"Very good, my sovereign lord," replied the knight. He bowed low before the king and went to his own chambers. He armed himself and tied his sword to his waist. Then he went down to the royal stables and ordered the white horse to be brought out of his stall. He had the horse's body covered with mail.

At the head of a picked body of soldiers, the knight went out of the city gate. Spurring his horse, he made a rapid charge towards the the camp of the first king. The enemy were taken by surprise. The knight captured the king and brought him back to the city. Returning to the battlefield, the knight mounted on the swift white horse, galloped into the second camp and took the king prisoner. In this way he repeated his brilliant charges and captured five kings alive.

For the sixth time he broke into the enemy camp and captured the king. At the moment of victory, an enemy soldier aimed an arrow

at the knight. It missed him, but pierced the flank of the white charger. Blood flowing from his wound, the horse galloped back to the city gates with the knight and his prisoner.

The knight gently loosened the mail from the charger's body and made him lie on his side. Seeing that the horse was seriously wounded, the knight ordered another steed to be made ready for him to ride to battle. The white horse opened his eyes and saw another horse being led forward. He thought to himself, "The knight is arming another horse. But this horse will not be able to break into the seventh camp and capture the king. The brave knight will be slain and King Brahmadatta will fall into the hands of his enemies. Everything that I have accomplished will be lost. I alone and no other horse, can enter the last camp to capture the king."

He called out to the knight, "Sir knight, only I will be able to charge the last camp and capture the king. I do not want everything that we have gained to be lost. Help me to my feet and put on my mail. I will take you once more to the battlefield."

The knight was filled with admiration for the brave charger. He anointed his wound





with oil and bound it with soft cloth. Then he put back the mail on the charger's body. Mounting him, he once more galloped across the plain and broke into the seventh camp. The last king was taken prisoner and brought to the city.

The knight rode in triumph through the streets of Banaras. At the palace gates he dismounted and knelt before King Brahmadatta, who had come out to receive him. The king praised both the valiant knight and the brave charger, who had together won such a tremendous victory.

His flanks heaving and covered with sweat, the white horse stood before the king. Fresh blood was dripping from his wound and he was completely exhausted with the effort he had made. The king exclaimed aloud when he realised that the charger was wounded. He immediately ordered his attendants to loosen the mail from the horse's body. The horse looked at the king with eyes now dim with agony and fatigue. In a faint voice he said, "Great king, do not put to death the seven captive kings. Have mercy on them. Make them swear everlasting loyalty to you and then send them back to their respective kingdoms. Reward the valiant knight well and

grant him the honours you would have given us both. As for yourself, be charitable to your subjects, follow the holy commandments and rule your kingdom with righteousness and justice."

No sooner had he finished speaking, than the noble horse sank to his knees. He closed his eyes, lay down on his side, and died.

King Brahmadatta ordered a state funeral for his brave and faithful charger. The body was cremated with the ceremony accorded a king. He gave lands and heaped great honours on the knight. He took an oath from the seven kings never to wage war on him again, then sent them back to their respective kingdoms. He remembered the last words of the noble horse and ruled his people wisely and well to the end of his days.

THE UGLY PRINCE

ONCE upon a time, King Okkaka ruled over the kingdom of Malla, in the capital city of Kusavat. His beloved queen was named Silavati. Their only sorrow was that they had no son. Daily, Queen Silavati prayed to Sakka, king of the gods. After many years her prayers were answered and she gave birth to a prince. There was great rejoicing in the kingdom of Malla and the baby prince, heir apparent to the throne, was named Kusa. Shortly after the birth of Prince Kusa, the queen had another son and he was named Jayampati.

Both princes were brought up with great care and instructed in all the arts and sciences. Prince Kusa was so intelligent, that by the age of sixteen, he was full of knowledge and wisdom. King Okkaka was very pleased with his son and decided to hand over the

kingdom to him. He told Queen Silavati, "My queen, I have decided to proclaim our elder son ruler of Malla. Before I install him as king, he must get married. He can choose his bride for himself, from amongst all the princesses in India. I leave this matter in your hands and it is for you to find out which princess he desires to make his consort."

Queen Silavati agreed readily to her lord's suggestion and sent her lady-in-waiting to the prince to lay this proposal before him. Now unfortunately, Prince Kusa, though of a wise and noble character, was extremely ugly. He said, "I am an ugly man. Which lovely princess will marry me? Even if a bride is found for me, she will look upon my face and immediately run away. It is of no use for me to marry. As long as my parents are alive, I will look after them. When they die, I will renounce my kingdom and the world and go into the forest and live the life of an ascetic."

He bade the lady-in-waiting convey this message to his parents. The king and queen were greatly distressed and after a few days, sent another message to Prince Kusa, begging him to change his mind. But the prince remained firm. The king and queen did not give up hope and continued to send messages to the

prince. Finally Prince Kusa thought, "It is not right to oppose my parents always. I will think of a way out of this situation."

He sent for the palace goldsmith and ordered him to make a golden statue in the form of a beautiful woman. The goldsmith followed his instructions and after a few days, brought the completed statue to the prince. But the prince was not satisfied and touched the statue with his hands. At once it glowed with a heavenly light and took on the features and form of a goddess. The prince sent the golden statue to his mother with the message, "When I find a princess as beautiful as this statue, I will marry her."

Queen Silavati summoned her councillors and told them, "Prince Kusa is the gift of Sakka, king of the gods. Therefore, he must marry a princess worthy of him. Have this figure placed in a chariot and send heralds with it across the length and breadth of India. When they see a king's daughter as beautiful as this statue, let them present the statue to the king and contract a marriage with the princess, for our son."

For over a year the heralds wandered throughout India with the golden statue in a golden chariot. Nowhere did they see a prin-

cess as fair as the statue, for it resembled more a celestial being than a human woman. At the end of their travels, they arrived at the city of Sagala, in the kingdom of Madda. Now the King of Madda had eight daughters of extraordinary beauty and the eldest was the fairest of them all.

The heralds, as was their custom, placed the statue on public view in the market place of Sagala and read aloud their proclamation. The maid of the king's eldest daughter was in the square at that time and just glancing at the statue, she cried out: "Fie! This image is not one-sixteenth as beautiful as my mistress."

"What do you mean?" asked the heralds. "Whom are you referring to?"

"Why, I mean Pabhavati, the King of Madda's eldest daughter," replied the maid.

At once the heralds went to the royal palace and asked for an audience with the king. The king received them courteously and having listened to them, he agreed that his daughter should marry Prince Kusa. He took the golden image as a gift and after entertaining the heralds for several days, sent them back to King Okkaka.

King Okkaka and Queen Silavati were very





pleased that a bride had been found for Kusa and they set out for the kingdom of Madda to fetch home the princess. They were greatly struck by Pabhavati's beauty, but Queen Silavati, being a wise woman, thought to herself, "The princess is very lovely and my son is very ugly. If she sees him, she will run away in a single day. I must think of a way out of this situation."

Having thought over the matter, she told the King of Madda, "Great King, we are very pleased to receive your daughter into our family. However, we have a family custom which she must observe. The bride and groom cannot see each other's faces for a period of one year. If you agree, then only can we take your daughter as our son's bride."

Queen Silavati hoped that after a year the princess would be so happy in her new home that she would not leave her husband. The King of Madda and Princess Pabhavati agreed to this proposal and the princess went to Malla as the bride of Prince Kusa. The marriage was celebrated with much pomp and pageantry and Prince Kusa became the King of Malla.

After some days King Kusa longed to see the face of his wife and to find out if she was

really as beautiful as the golden image. He asked his mother to make the arrangements. Queen Silavati refused and told her son to wait. But he was not satisfied and insisted on seeing his bride. Finally the queen came in and told Kusa, "Put on the dress of an elephant trainer and go to the stables. I will bring your bride there and you can look at her for as long as you like. But on no account must you make yourself known to her."

King Kusa dressed as an elephant-keeper and went to the royal stables. Meanwhile the queen told Pabhavati, "Come with me to the stables and let us see the royal elephants. The king has recently acquired a white elephant which, as you know, is very rare in India."

The princess agreed and went with her mother-in-law to the stables. Kusa was overwhelmed at the sight of her beauty, and blessed his good luck in having such a beautiful wife.

Some days after this, Pabhavati in her turn longed to see her husband and went and asked Queen Silavati if this was possible. The queen refused, but when she saw that Pabhavati was determined to have her way, she told her, "Very well. Tomorrow the king will ride in state through the city. You can see him through your window."

The queen told Prince Jayampati to ride in the king's seat and Kusa to sit behind as the mahout. The next day Pabhavati watched the procession from her window and taking Jayampati to be the king, was overjoyed at the sight of her handsome husband. When the procession had passed, Queen Silavati asked Pabhavati, "Well, were you pleased with your husband?"

"Oh yes, noble queen," was the reply. "But I have never seen a more ugly mahout. Surely it is not fitting for such a creature to ride behind the king. He is very bold too. He raised his eyes and gazed long at me.'

Thinking this over Pabhavati began to wonder if the bold mahout was in reality the king. "No doubt Kusa is hideous and that is why they have never allowed me to see him. But how can I find out which is the king ?" She called her faithful maid and told her to go to the palace gate. "See which of the two gets down first. Whomsoever dismounts first, will be Kusa."

The maid went to the palace gate and waited. When the royal elephant knelt down, Kusa dismounted first and then Prince Jayampati. The maid ran and told her mistress what she had seen. Pabhavati realised

that the ugly mahout was really King Kusa, her husband and in horror, she fainted. For days she wept and refused to eat, until finally she sent a message to Kusa begging him to allow her to return home. Kusa who was truly a noble and gentle man, thought, "If I do not let her go, her heart will break. Let her return home and by my own powers I will bring her back again."

Pabhavati departed with her ladies-in-waiting and returned home to her father. Kusa was overcome with sorrow and he in turn began to long for his wife. He took no interest in the affairs of his kingdom and one day he told his mother, "Dear mother, rule my kingdom for me, while I go in search of Pabhavati. I cannot live without her and must fetch her home."

Queen Silavati blessed her son and sadly bade him farewell. Kusa put on the garb of a common man and taking a bowl of food, a thousand pieces of gold, a flute and a dagger, set out on foot for the city of Sagala. When he had arrived, he sat down under the palace walls and played his flute. Pabhavati heard him and realised that her husband had come in search of her.

When Kusa had finished playing, he went

to the king's potter and became his apprentice. After a few days he had learnt his trade so well, that he made several beautiful bowls and one specially for Pabhavati, with her image embossed on it. The potter took these bowls to the king, who was very pleased with them. He gave him a thousand pieces of gold. The potter presented the special bowl to Pabhavati.

"Who made this?" she asked.

"My assistant," was the reply.

Pabhavati realised that the bowl had been made by Kusa, and in a rage she threw it to the ground, where it smashed into a thousand pieces.

When he heard this, Kusa left the potter and going to the king's basket-maker, became his assistant. He made a palm leaf fan and painted a portrait of Pabhavati on it. The basket-maker took his wares to the court and presented the fan to Pabhavati. When she saw it, she recognised it as the handwork of Kusa. In a fury she tore it to pieces and dismissed the basket-maker from her presence.

Poor Kusa was very downcast when he heard what the princess had done and sadly he left the basket-maker's service. But he was still determined to win back Pabhavati. He went to the palace and joined the royal staff

as an assistant gardener. He wove a beautiful wreath of flowers and in the centre put together several roses in the shape of a lovely woman. The head gardener presented the wreath to Pabhavati. She realised that Kusa was working in the palace gardens and tore the garland to shreds and stamped on the flowers with her feet.

In desperation Kusa engaged himself as a palace cook, thinking that by this means he might at least be able to see his hard-hearted wife. Everyday he toiled in the palace kitchens and sometimes was sent by the head cook to take the food to the royal apartments.

One day when he was carrying the midday meal, he saw Pabhavati standing in the doorway of her chamber and plucking up his courage, spoke to her, "Because of your beauty Pabhavati, I have left my kingdom and come in search of you. I cannot live without you and I want only your love and nothing else. Come back to Kusavati with me, lovely princess and whatever you wish for will be yours."

Pabhavati stared at Kusa, and was filled with anger that he had dared to address her.

"It is your ill-luck King Kusa, to love me. You might as well try and dig through a bed of rock with a wooden spade, or try and catch

the wind in a net, as to love an unwilling woman." Having replied thus she went to her room and shut the door.

Kusa did not see her again and when seven months had passed by, he thought to himself, "After living here for so long I cannot even see Pabhavati. She is very harsh and cruel. I am sick and weary of toiling day after day as a servant. I will return home to my father and mother."

Sakka, king of the gods, saw what was happening from his abode in heaven and determined to set matters right. He sent messengers to seven kings saying, "Pabhavati, princess of Madda, has left her husband, King Kusa. I invite you to come to Madda and marry her." The messages were sent in the name of the King of Madda and each king received the same summons. They all arrived at Madda with their courtiers. Each, on seeing the others asked, "Why have you come here?"

They discovered that they had all been sent for to marry Princess Pabhavati, and were very annoyed.

"Is the King of Madda going to marry his daughter to seven of us? He is making fun of us. Let him resolve the matter satisfactorily or he can fight us all."

They sent this message to the king, and surrounded the city with their armies.

The king was both frightened and angry and told his courtiers, "If I give Pabhavati to any one of them, the others will immediately wage war against me. She deserves to be punished for having left Kusa, the greatest king in India. I shall have her killed and cut her body up into seven pieces and send one piece to each king. Only in this way will I be able to save my kingdom."

The courtiers were very frightened when they heard the terrible decision that the king had taken, and they went and told Pabhavati. Immediately, the poor princess ran to her mother's apartment and begged the queen to save her. The queen went to the king and asked him to reconsider his decision, but the king remained firm. The queen went back to Pabhavati and cried aloud, "Alas my daughter, if only King Kusa were here, he would defeat these seven kings and take you away with him."

Pabhavati could not remain silent any longer and said, "Lady mother, King Kusa has been in Madda for the past seven months. Even now he is working in the palace as a cook, all for love of me."

At first the queen refused to believe Pabhavati, until the pleas and tears of her daughter convinced her that it was the truth. She was very angry with Pabhavati for having allowed Kusa, a great king to work as a servant and went and told the king the whole story. The king came hurrying to his daughter and said to her, "You have done a great wrong to this noble king. You should not have kept silent all these months and allowed him to live in this manner."

He went to the palace kitchen and seeing Kusa, folded his hands and begged his pardon. Kusa comforted him saying, "Oh King, it was equally wrong of me to have disguised myself for so long. But I did it for love of your daughter. What has happened is no fault of yours."

Then the king sent Pabhavati to Kusa, ordering her to beg his forgiveness. Pabhavati fell at Kusa's feet. "Forgive me, great King. Never again will I do anything to offend you. Only save me from my father's anger and from the seven kings who wish to wed me."

Kusa, because of his great love for Pabhavati, spoke gently to her, "Do not fear, my princess. There is nothing that I will not do for you. For your sake I will fight the seven kings who dare to ask for your hand in marriage."

Kusa dressed himself in a king's robes and mounted a richly decorated elephant. The elephant-keeper held a white umbrella, the symbol of royalty over his head, and they went out of the city gates followed by a body of archers. Kusa confronted the seven kings and cried out, "I am King Kusa of the great kingdom of Malla. Which of you will do battle with me for the hand of Pabhavati, who is my rightful queen?"

The seven kings were stricken with terror at the awesome sight of Kusa and the archers and falling down before him begged for mercy. Kusa thought, "Of what use is it to slay these kings? They have come here in search of a wife. Pabhavati has seven sisters who can be their brides."

He returned to the palace and told the king of Madda of his decision. The king was overjoyed that there would not be any bloodshed. The seven kings were brought in state to the city and married to the seven princesses, amidst scenes of great pomp and rejoicing.

After the festivities were over, King Kusa and Pabhavati returned to Malla, where they lived happily to the end of their days.

THE INCOMPARABLE ARCHER

ONCE upon a time, when Brahmadatta was king of Banaras, his queen bore a son. The baby prince being the first-born, was named Asadisa Kumara, or Prince Peerless. When he was a year old, the queen had a second son. He was named Brahmadatta Kumara, or Prince Heaven Sent.

At the age of sixteen, Prince Peerless went to Takkasila for higher studies. He was taught the three Vedas and the eighteen accomplishments by a world famous teacher. He also learnt the science of archery. In this art he was unequalled by any other student. After he had completed his education he returned to Banaras.

A few years later King Brahmadatta fell seriously ill. He realised that he had not much longer to live, and sent for his two sons. He commanded Prince Peerless to rule the

Kingdom, and named Prince Heaven Sent as the heir-apparent. Having made his wishes known, he died shortly afterwards.

In accordance with the king's last wishes, the ministers offered the crown to Peerless. He refused to accept it, saying that he did not care for the pomp and glory of a king's position. So Heaven Sent was installed as king, and holy water sprinkled on his head. Peerless continued to live in royal state in one of the smaller palaces.

Now there were some slaves in his employ, who hated him and wished to do him harm. They went and told Heaven Sent, "Prince Peerless is secretly plotting with your enemies, and wants to become king in your place."

Heaven Sent believed the slaves, for he had always been jealous of his brother. He sent a body of soldiers to take Peerless prisoner. But one of the prince's loyal attendants warned him in time. The same night, Peerless disguised himself and escaped from his palace. He made his way to a neighbouring kingdom. When he had reached the capital, he went to the royal palace and offered his services to the king, as an archer.

"What wages does he want?" the king asked his courtiers.

"A hundred thousand pieces of silver a year," was the reply.

"Good. Let him enter."

Peerless entered the council hall and stood before the king.

"Are you the archer?" asked the king.

"Yes sire."

"Very well, I will take you into my service."

The old archers who had been many years in royal service grumbled amongst themselves at the wage given to Peerless.

"Far too much for a newcomer," they said.

One day, the king decided to spend the morning in his park. A magnificent couch was put down at the foot of a mango tree, and he reclined on it. Looking up he saw a cluster of ripe golden mangoes hanging from the top of the tree.

"The tree is much too high for anyone to climb," thought the king.

He sent for his archers and told them, "Aim your arrows at that cluster of mangoes and bring them down."

"Oh your Majesty," replied the archers, "that is not much for us to do. Your Majesty has seen our skill often enough. The new

archer is much better paid than we are. Why not ask him to bring down the fruit."

The king sent for Peerless. "Can you bring down the mangoes at the top of this tree?" he asked.

"Oh yes, your Majesty," replied Peerless, "but only if I may choose my position."

"What position do you want?"

"The place where your couch is standing."

The king had the couch removed and stood far away from the tree. Peerless had no bow in his hand, as he used to carry it under his clothes. A screen was brought and placed in front of him. He put on a red undergarment and over this he wore a white tunic. He tied a red sash around his waist and fastened his girdle. From his leather bag he took out a sword which was in pieces. He put it together and slung it on his left side.

Then he took out his great ram's-horn bow, which was also in several pieces, and fitted it together. He put on a cloth of mail made out of gold and fastened his bowcase on his back. He set a red turban on his head, and twirling the arrow in his hands, he emerged from behind the screen. His appearance was so striking, that everyone stared at him in wonder. He went up to the mango tree, and placing his


DOWLE'



arrow on the bow, asked the king, "Your Majesty, shall I bring this fruit down by an upward shot, or by dropping the arrow on it from above?"

"My son," said the king, "I have often seen an object brought down by an upward shot, but never one dropped by a falling arrow. You had better make the arrow fall on the fruit."

"Your Majesty," said Peerless, "I will aim my arrow high. It will fly up to the heaven of the Four Great Kings and then return to earth. You must be patient till it returns."

The king gave his promise to be patient. Then Peerless said, "Your Majesty, as it flies up, this arrow will pierce the mango stalk exactly in the middle. When it comes down, it will not turn a hair's-breadth either way, but hit the same spot and bring down the mango cluster with it."

He aimed the arrow high. As it flew upwards it pierced the exact centre of the mango stalk. Soon Peerless knew that his arrow had reached the heaven of the Four Great Kings. He let fly another arrow with greater speed than the first. This struck the feathers of the first arrow and turned it downwards. The second arrow continued to fly upwards and reached the heaven of the Thirty-Three Archangels. Here the gods caught it and kept it.

The sound of the first arrow as it hurtled through the air, was like the sound of a falling thunderbolt.

"What is that?" asked the courtiers.

"That is the arrow falling," replied Peerless.

The bystanders were terrified lest the arrow fall on them. So Peerless called out, "Do not be afraid. I will not allow the arrow to fall on the earth."

Down came the arrow, dead straight on its course. It had neatly cut through the stalk of the mango cluster. Peerless caught the arrow in one hand and the fruit in the other, so that neither should fall on the ground.

"We have never seen such a feat before," cried the courtiers. They clapped and cheered, and waved their kerchiefs in the air. They were so delighted that they gave presents worth ten million pieces of silver to Peerless. The king also showered gifts and honours on the prince.

While Peerless was receiving such glory and honour in another kingdom, seven kings marched with their men on Banaras. They were confident of victory, for they knew that Peerless was no longer there. They sent a messenger to King Heaven Sent, telling him to

either fight or surrender. Heaven Sent was terrified at the prospect of battle.

"Where is my brother?" he anxiously asked the courtiers.

"He is in the service of a neighbouring king," was the reply.

"I am lost if my brother does not come to my aid," cried Heaven Sent. He sent for his messenger and ordered him, "Go to Peerless and fall at his feet in my name. Beg pardon for me, and offer him anything that he wishes. Only bring him back here as soon as you can."

The messenger mounted his horse, and galloped with the speed of lightning to the neighbouring kingdom where Peerless was in service. He gave him his brother's message. Peerless who was a truly noble prince, decided to forgive Heaven Sent and help him. He took leave of his master and returned to Banaras. He went to the palace and told Heaven Sent, "Fear nothing. I am here with you once more."

He scratched a message on an arrow. 'I, Prince Peerless, have returned to Banaras. I mean to kill you with a single arrow, which I will aim at you. If you value your lives, escape while you can.'

He aimed his arrow at the camp of the

seven kings. It fell in the middle of a golden dish, from which they were eating together. They read the message and fled with their armies, half dead with fright.

Thus did Prince Peerless defeat seven mighty kings, without shedding a drop of blood. Then he went to his brother Heaven Sent, and advised him to rule his people wisely and well. He took leave of him and retired to his own chamber. He took off his fine robes and laid aside his bow and arrow and his sword. He put on a simple white garment and, with nothing but a staff in his hand, he left the city. He went to the forest outside Banaras, and made his home in a simple log hut. He renounced the world, and spent the rest of his days in prayer and meditation.

THE MOUNTAIN OF THE MOON

ONCE upon a time, there lived a fairy in the high Himalayas. He had a very beautiful wife and her name was Canda. They dwelt happily together on a silver mountain named Canda-Pabbata, or the Mountain of the Moon.

Now, at that time, the king of Banaras grew weary of ruling his kingdom, and decided to wander throughout India for a year. He ordered his ministers to govern Banaras during his absence. He put on a yellow robe and carrying a spear, a bow, a battle-axe, a sword and a shield, went alone to the Himalayas. When he had reached the foot of the mighty mountains, he sat down to rest. Sighting a stag in the distance he let fly with his bow and arrow, and succeeded in killing the animal.

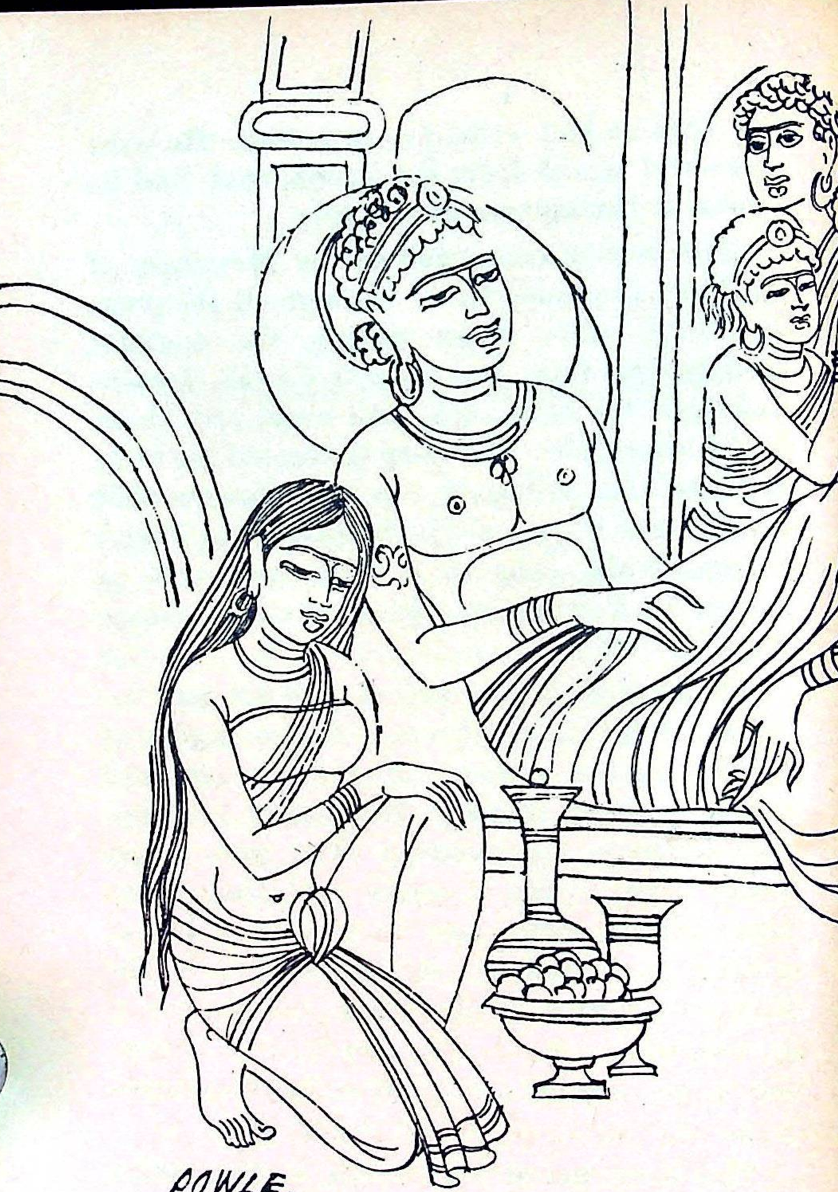
He cooked the tasty meat over a wood fire and had a good meal. Unfortunately, there was no stream there. He remembered a small

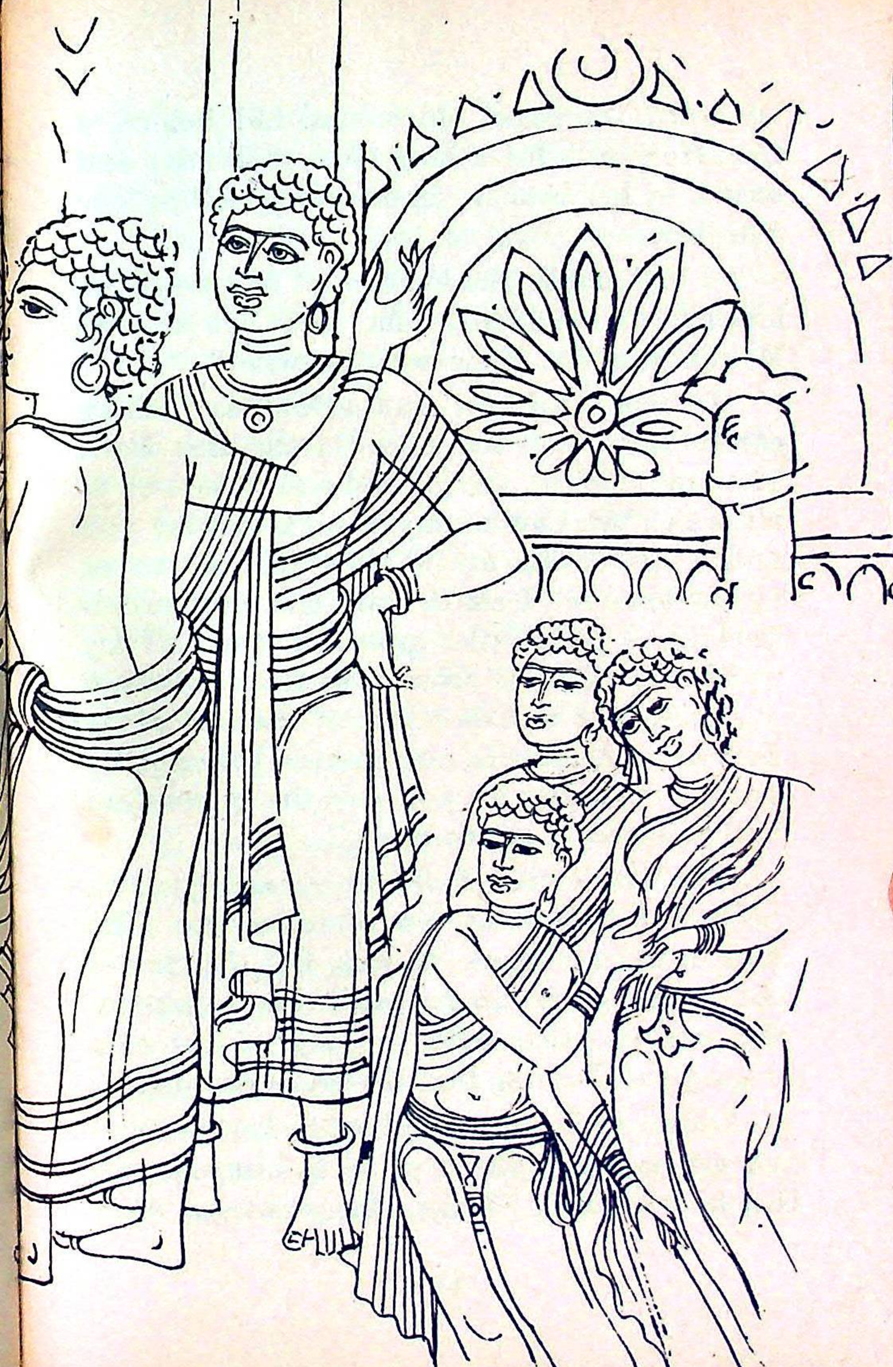
hill that he had visited once before. He went there and drank from the stream that had its source at the bottom of the hill.

The fairies that lived on the Mountain of the Moon remained there throughout the year, and only came down during the summer months. Our fairy and his wife Canda, descended from the mountain, and wandered about in the lower hills. The fairy perfumed his body and ate the pollen of the wild flowers that grew on the hillsides. He clothed himself with flower petals, sang in a voice as sweet as honey, and swung on the creepers to amuse himself.

He arrived at the stream and got into the water with Canda. The two fairies scattered flowers on the surface of the stream and splashed about merrily. When they had finished bathing, they put on their flower garments. They found a sandy spot that shone like a silver plate, and spreading a bed of flowers, lay down to rest. After a while, the fairy picked up a bamboo reed and playing on it, began to sing in his honey-sweet voice. Canda, waving her pretty white hands, danced to the tune and sang softly to herself.

The king heard the sound of the fairies singing. Walking softly, so that he would not


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be heard, he came closer and hid behind a tree. He gazed for a long time at Canda, and struck by her beauty, immediately fell in love with her.

"I will shoot the husband," he thought to himself. "I will kill him and live on the Mountain of the Moon with his wife."

He raised his bow and arrow, and taking careful aim, shot the fairy through the chest. The fairy fell to the ground and cried out to his wife, "Ah Canda, my blood is flowing fast and I am losing my hold on life. I can no longer breathe. I am in pain and my heart is burning. I perish like grass on a tree. I dry up like a waterless river. The tears fall from my eyes, like rain on a lake at the foot of the mountain. Ah Canda, my heart is burning. My heart is yearning for you and the sorrow you will feel when I am no more."

The fairy's voice faded away, and lying on his bed of flowers, he lost consciousness. The king remained where he was. But Canda did not realise that her husband was wounded. She was so filled with the joy of her own singing and dancing that she heard nothing.

After a while, she called out to her husband and got no reply. She went up to him and saw that he was lying lifeless. She wondered what

was the matter with him. Bending down, she saw blood oozing from his chest. Terrified, she cried out aloud.

"Ah, the fairy must be dead," said the king. He came out from his hiding place and stood in front of Canda. When Canda saw him she thought, "This must be the villain who has slain my husband."

Trembling with fear, she ran as fast as she could to the top of the hill. She cried out to the king who was standing below, "Evil prince, you have mortally wounded my husband. Now he lies on the ground beneath a woodland tree. May you suffer for the terrible wrong you have done. Ah, my heart is broken to see my husband lie so still and white."

The king tried to comfort Canda and called out to her,

"O lovely one, weep and grieve no more. The royal house of Banaras will honour you, for I will make you my queen."

"What do you say !" cried Canda. "I will kill myself, for I will never be your wife. You slew my innocent husband and your hands are stained with his blood."

When he heard Canda weep, the king felt sorrow for his deed. All desire for her left him, and he said gently to her, "Beautiful

fairy, continue to live in the Himalayas. You are a creature of the woods, and you will never be happy away from here." He turned away and went down the hill.

When Canda saw that he had gone, she went to her husband and carried him to the top of the hill. Placing his head on her lap she wept aloud, "O husband mine, what shall I do now that you are gone? There are deep grottoes and caves in these mountains, and wild animals wander across the hills. Flowering trees and leafy bushes grow in many a beautiful glade. Crystal clear rivers run down the hills which are covered with flowers. The Himalayas are shaded blue and lovely to see. In the morning, gold tips the mountains, and in the evening, they glow red. The peaks are sharp and the snowy tops gleam silver in the sun. Rainbow colours chase across the snows and they are most beautiful to see. Goblins live on Fragrant Hill which is overgrown with wild flowers. We fairies also love Fragrant Hill, and play and sing there the whole day long. But all this beauty means nothing to me, now that you are gone, my Lord. What shall I do without you, how shall I live without you, my dear husband?"

Sadly Canda picked up one of the fairy's

hands and kissed it. She felt that it was still warm.

"He lives, he lives," she cried out in joy. "I will beg the gods to restore him to health."

She raised her face to the skies and called out, "Where are you, who rule heaven and earth ? Are you away on a journey, or are you asleep, that you do not hear my prayers for my husband ?"

Heaven rang with her cries. Looking down from his throne, Sakka, king of the gods, saw Canda weeping on the hilltop. He disguised himself as a brahmin and descended to earth, carrying a pitcher of holy water. He approached the wounded fairy and sprinkled him with a few drops of the water. Immediately, the blood stopped flowing from the wound, and it healed up as if by magic. The fairy stood up without a mark on his body to show where he had been injured. Canda, seeing that her beloved husband was well again, fell at Sakka's feet and gratefully said, "May you live long, holy brahmin. You have saved my husband by sprinkling him with the water of life."

Sakka told the fairy and Canda, "In future do not leave the Mountain of the Moon to go down to the haunts of men. Remain there and

you will be safe." Then he disappeared in a cloud of mist and returned to his throne in heaven.

Canda turned to her husband, "Let us stay here no longer, my lord. It is too dangerous for folk like us. Come, let us return to the Mountain of the Moon, where the sparkling streams flow, and the banks are strewn with flowers. There the breeze whispers forever through the shady trees, and we can pass the daytime hours in song and dance."

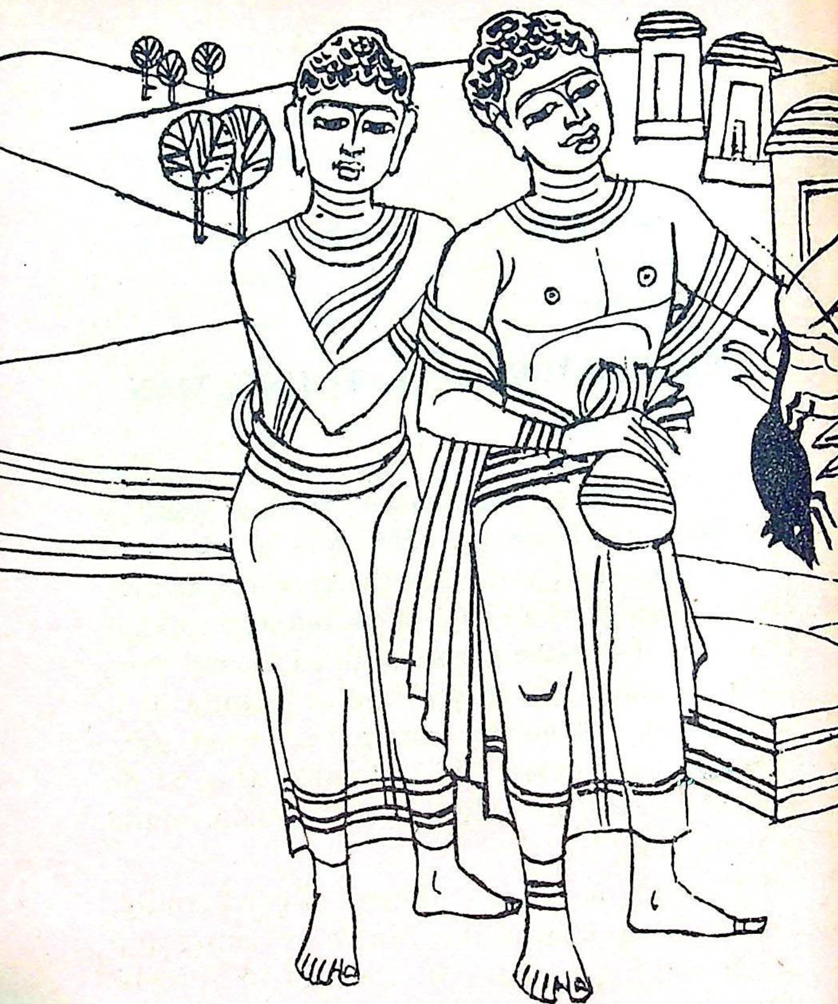
So the fairy and his wife Canda, went back to the Mountain of the Moon and lived there happily ever after.

THE RESOURCEFUL YOUNG MAN

ONCE upon a time, there lived a wealthy merchant in Banaras. He was a wise and clever man, and was made the king's treasurer. One morning when he was on his way to visit the king, he came across a dead mouse lying on the road. He stopped, and looking at it said aloud, "A clever young man need only pick up that mouse. If he knows what to do with it, he will be able to start a business and get married."

A young man, poor, though of good family, was walking behind the king's treasurer and overheard his words. He thought to himself, "The king's treasurer is an intelligent man, and always has a good reason for whatever he says."

So he picked up the mouse and took it to a nearby inn. He sold it for one copper piece





to the inn-keeper, who gave it to his cat to eat. With the money the young man bought some molasses. He put some drinking water in a jar and went to the forest outside the city. There he met a party of flower-gatherers, who were returning home from work. He gave each of them a small quantity of molasses and some water to drink. In return, they presented him with several bunches of wild flowers.

The young man sold the flowers in the market-place, and bought some more molasses with the money. The next day he returned to the forest with his jar full of water. He again distributed the molasses and water to the flower-gatherers, and in payment was given some flowering plants. He sold these for eight copper pieces.

Some days later, there was a heavy shower of rain, and a strong wind blew over the city. Hundreds of rotten branches and dead leaves fell down in the palace gardens. The royal gardener was at his wit's end as to how to clear away the rubbish. The young man who was passing by, saw the gardener staring unhappily at the untidy garden. He went up to him and said, "Good sir, I will clear the garden within a day, provided you let me take away the fallen wood and leaves."

"Agreed," replied the relieved gardener.

The young man called several of the neighbourhood children together. He gave each of them some molasses, and told them to remove the rubbish from the king's garden. They set to work willingly, and by evening, all the fallen wood and leaves were piled in a large heap in front of the garden gates.

At dusk, the king's potter passed the gates on his way home after the day's work in the palace. Seeing the dead wood, he immediately bought it from the young man, as fuel to fire his bowls. He gave the young man sixteen copper pieces, as well as five large jars, and several smaller bowls. Now the young man had twenty-four copper pieces in all.

He decided that he must get rich quickly. So he thought of a plan. He filled his jars with drinking water, and waited near the city gates. When evening fell, five hundred peasants, who had been mowing grass in the fields outside the city, returned home. The young man gave them all cool water to drink. They were very grateful, for they were hot and thirsty after the day's labour. They said, "You have done us a good turn, friend. What can we do for you?"

"Nothing for now," replied the young man. "I will let you know when I need your help."

He then visited a merchant and a sea-trader, who were known to his family. The three of them went to a nearby inn where they ate a good meal. The merchant, who had taken a liking to the young man, told him, "Tomorrow, a horse-trader will come to Banaras to sell five hundred horses."

When the young man heard this, he went to the peasants and told them, "I want each of you to deliver a bundle of grass to my house tomorrow, and not to sell your grass until I have sold mine."

"Certainly," replied the peasants. The next day, they delivered five hundred bundles of grass at the young man's house. When the horse-trader arrived in Banaras, no one was prepared to sell him grass to feed his horses. So he was forced to buy grass from the young man for a thousand pieces of silver.

A few days later, the sea-trader told the young man that a large cargo ship had arrived in port. At once the clever fellow thought of another plan. He hired a stylish carriage for eight copper pieces. He dressed himself in his finest garments, and drove down to the port in the carriage. He went aboard the ship and impressed the captain by his fine manner and polite speeeh. He managed to buy the

ship on credit, and left his signet ring as security.

Next, he hired a cloth pavilion, and had it pitched on the quay side. He seated himself within, and told his servants, "If any merchants wish to see me on business, let them be announced with due pomp and ceremony."

The same day, a hundred merchants came to the port to buy the ship's cargo. They were told that they were too late, as the cargo had already been sold to a great merchant. So they went to see the young man, and were ceremoniously shown into his presence. Each of the merchants gave the young man a thousand pieces of silver to buy a share in the ship's cargo. They further gave a thousand silver pieces each to buy him out altogether. So the young man gained two hundred thousand pieces of silver by his shrewdness.

Full of gratitude to the king's treasurer who had set him on the path to fortune, the young man went to visit him.

"How did you come by all this wealth?" asked the king's treasurer.

"Simply by following your advice in four short months," replied the young man.

He told the king's treasurer the whole story of how he had gained his riches, starting with

the sale of the dead mouse. The king's treasurer was very impressed with the clever young man, and decided to give his daughter in marrige to him.

So the young man who had started life poor, but intelligent, married the king's treasurer's daughter. The king's treasurer settled all his family estates on his son-in-law, who managed them so well, that their value was greatly increased. When the king's treasurer died, the young man became the king's treasurer in his place. He lived on in Banaras, respected and admired by all the citizens of the city to the end of his days.

THE PIGEON AND THE CROW

In the olden days, the people of Banaras were very pious. They performed good deeds, so that when they died, they would go to heaven. They were particularly fond of animals and birds. Many of the citizens hung up straw baskets outside their houses, where birds could nest or shelter at night.

The cook of the chief minister of Banaras, used to hang one of these baskets in his kitchen. A snow-white pigeon made his home in this basket. At dawn he flew away in search of food, and returned only in the evening.

One day, a crow flew past the kitchen, and saw the fresh fish and meat being cooked. He was a very greedy bird, and longed to taste the delicious-smelling food. He perched on a tree outside the kitchen, and wondered how he could get in without being discovered.




POWLE

When evening fell, he saw the pigeon return and go into the kitchen.

"Ah," thought the crow. "I will manage to enter with the help of the pigeon."

So he went away and returned at dawn the next day. When the pigeon left the kitchen in search of his daily food, the crow followed him from place to place like his shadow. Finally the pigeon said to the crow, "Why do you keep following me around, my friend ?"

"My lord," replied the cunning crow, "I am full of admiration for your appearance and behaviour. That is why I wish to follow you."

"But your food and mine are not the same," replied the pigeon. "If you follow me you will get nothing to eat."

"My lord, when you are feeding, I will eat by your side," was the answer.

"Very well," said the pigeon, "come with me."

The two birds flew away to a field outside the city. The pigeon pecked at scattered seeds, while the crow turned over pieces of cowdung and ate the insects underneath. When he had eaten enough, he hopped up to the pigeon and said piously, "My lord, you

spend too much time eating. Excess of any kind is not a good thing."

When the sun set, the pigeon flew back to the chief minister's kitchen. The crow followed him inside.

"Why, the pigeon has brought home another bird," exclaimed the cook. He hung up a second basket for the crow, and the two birds lived side by side.

A few days later a citizen of Banaras sent the chief minister a present of rohita fish, freshly caught in the River Ganges. When the crow saw the fish brought into the kitchen, his mouth began to water. He decided to stay at home the next day, and help himself to the fish. All night long he groaned in his straw basket. At daybreak, when the pigeon was ready to set out, he called the crow. "Come along, friend crow. Why do you delay?"

"Oh my lord, I can't go with you to day. I have a terrible stomach-ache."

"My friend, I have never heard of crows having pains in their stomach. You must be longing for the fish in the kitchen here. Listen to me. Human food will not agree with you. Do not be so weak-minded and come along with me."

"I can't get up, my lord," groaned the crow.

"Very well. Only don't be greedy and resist temptation." Saying this, the pigeon flew away to hunt for his food.

A little later the cook came into the kitchen, and started cleaning the fish. He dressed some of the fish in one way, and some in another. Then he put them in different pans to cook on the fire. When the water was boiling, he lifted the lids slightly to let out the steam. It was very hot in the kitchen, so he went and stood outside the door, wiping the sweat from his forehead. When the crow saw that the kitchen was empty, he popped his head out of the basket.

"It is now or never," he thought to himself "The only question is whether I should pick up a whole roast fish or smaller pieces."

Arguing to himself that it would take too long to bone and eat a whole fish, he decided to take several pieces and eat them quietly in his basket. He flew out and sat down on the lid of a pan. The lid fell down with a clatter. Hearing the noise, the cook ran in.

"What can that noise be," he cried, and saw the crow. "Oh, it is that wicked crow wanting to eat my master's dinner. I cook for my

master, not for that wretched bird. What is he to me, I should like to know."

He caught hold of the crow and pulled all the feathers off his body. Then he ground some ginger with salt and cumminseed, and mixed it with some sour buttermilk. He rubbed the mixture all over the crow, and flung him back into his basket. The crow lay there, groaning in agony. In the evening the pigeon returned, and saw the miserable condition of the crow.

"Oh you greedy crow," he exclaimed. "You did not listen to me and this is the result. Headstrong people like you never take the wise advice of well-meaning friends. Now you are suffering as a result of your stupid actions. You have brought me to shame. I can live here no longer."

The pigeon flew away to look for another home. The cook picked up the crow, basket and all, and flung him out of the door on top of the dustbin. And that was the end of the greedy crow.

THE THREE FRIENDS

LONG ago there lived an antelope near a lake in the forest outside Banaras. A woodpecker nested on the branches of a sal tree, that stood on the banks of the lake. In the mud at the bottom of the lake, dwelt a tortoise. The three were close friends, and lived happily together.

One day, a hunter was wandering through the woods. He saw the antelope's footprints leading towards the lake, and decided to trap the animal. He hid a leather trap, as strong as iron, under some dead leaves, and went on his way. Late at night the antelope went down to the lake to drink water. He stumbled into the trap, and his hind leg was caught fast. He cried so loudly that the woodpecker woke up and flew down from his treetop. The tortoise also heard the antelope, and crawled out of

the water. The two put their heads together, to decide how they could help their friend.

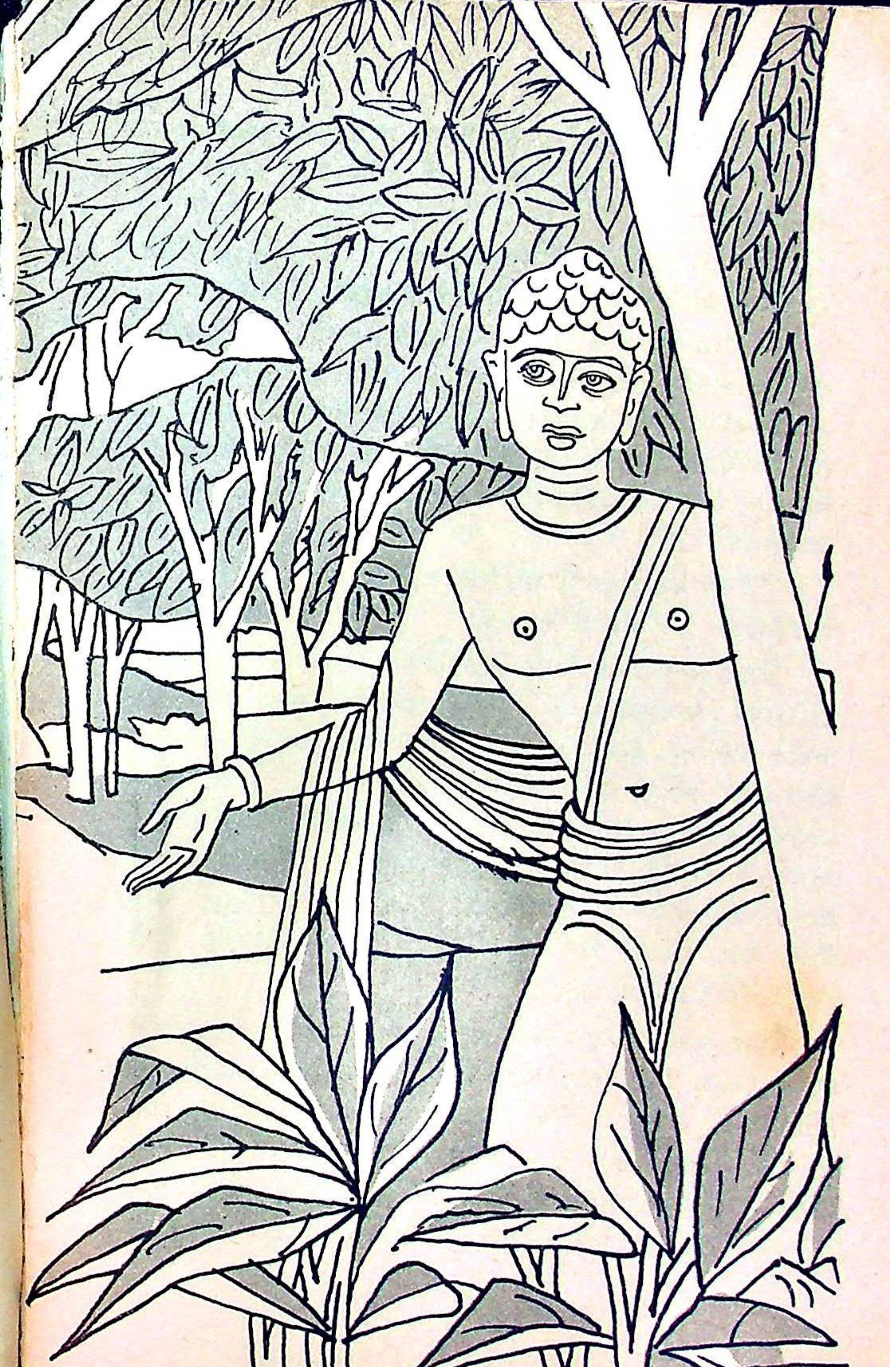
The woodpecker said to the tortoise, "You have very sharp teeth. You will be able to bite through the leather trap. I will go to the hunter's dwelling, and try to prevent him from coming here. If we both do our best we can save the antelope."

The tortoise began to gnaw through the leather thongs that gripped the antelope's leg. The woodpecker flew away to the hunter's dwelling. At dawn the hunter got up, and decided to see if the antelope had fallen into his trap. He picked up his bag and sharpened his hunting knife. When the woodpecker saw the hunter leave by the front door, he screeched loudly and struck him in the face with his wings.

"Some bird of ill-omen has struck me," thought the hunter. Hastily he went back to the hut and sat down inside. After a while he got up again, and took his knife out of his bag. The woodpecker who was watching through a window thought, "Last time the hunter left by the front door. Now he is sure to try the back door."

He perched on a bush behind the hut. The hunter also said to himself, "When I went out





of the front door, a bird of ill-omen prevented me from leaving. Now I will try the back door."

As he left, the woodpecker flew up, screeched loudly and struck him again in the face.

"This bird will not let me pass," the hunter exclaimed angrily. He went inside the hut and sat down again. He decided to wait for some time before attempting to leave. Meanwhile, the woodpecker hastened back to his friends.

"The hunter is on his way," he cried to the tortoise. "Make haste."

The tortoise had gnawed through all the thongs except one. His mouth was covered with blood, and his teeth were so sore, that he felt that they were about to fall out. The antelope saw the hunter, knife in hand, cautiously approaching through the trees. With a tremendous effort, he burst the last thong, and fled into the forest. The woodpecker flew back to his treetop.

The poor tortoise was so weak and exhausted that he was unable to move, and lay where he was. The hunter picked him up and threw him into his bag. The antelope was standing behind a tree, and saw what the hunter had done. He resolved to save the tortoise.

He came out of his hiding place, and pretending to be very weak, limped towards the hunter. Watching him come nearer, the hunter thought, "The antelope looks completely worn out. Now I am sure I will be able to catch him."

He took out his knife and ran towards the antelope. Keeping just out of the hunter's reach, the antelope led him, into the depths of the forest. Soon the hunter lost his way. He could no longer see the antelope, as the trees were so close to one another. The antelope took another path and ran back to the tortoise. He lifted up the hunter's bag with his horns, and ripped it open. Then he put the bag down on the ground and let the tortoise out. The woodpecker flew down from the tree.

The antelope told his friends, "Both of you saved my life. You are true friends. Soon the hunter will find his way back, and try to catch you. Friend woodpecker, fly away with your family, and live on a tree far from here. As for you friend tortoise, dive back into the lake and stay on the far side."

The woodpecker and the tortoise did as they were told. The antelope went away to a distant part of the forest. The hunter returned and saw that the three friends had dis-

appeared. Sadly he picked up his torn bag and went home.

The tortoise, the woodpecker and the antelope remained firm friends, and lived happily in the forest for the rest of their lives.

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